

Hiraethog Rural District Council

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1945

To the Chairman and Members of the Hiraethog Rural District Council :

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my annual report for the year 1945—such statistics and information as are available for the whole District are included, but the report deals mainly with the upper area.

GENERAL STATISTICS :—

Area of District	93,079 acres
Population (Last census)	5,874
Estimated population (1945)	5,233
Inhabited houses (1945)	1,747
Rateable Value of District	£29,213
Product of Penny Rate	£120

VITAL STATISTICS (Whole District)

	M	F	Total
Live Births	41	36	77
Legitimate	33	30	63
Illegitimate	8	6	14
Still Births	1	—	1
Legitimate	1	—	1
Deaths (all ages).....	35	49	84
Infants under 1 year of age	2	2	4
Legitimate	—	1	1
Illegitimate	2	1	3

These figures represent the following rates as compared with those of the District in the previous year and the present year's General Rates :—

1945 District Live Birth Rate per 1,000 population	14.7
1944 District Live Births Rate per 1,000 population ...	19.4
1945 General Live Birth Rate per 1,000 population.....	16.1

1945 District Still Birth Rate per 1,000 population	0.19
1944 General Still Birth Rate per 1,000 population	0.5
1945 General Still Birth Rate per 1,000 population	0.46
1945 District Death Rate (crude) per 1,000 population	16.0
1944 District Death Rate (crude) per 1,000 population	16.3
1945 General Death Rate (crude) per 1,000 population	11.4
1945 District Infantile Mortality per 1,000 Live Births	52
1944 District Infantile Mortality per 1,000 Live Births	40
1945 General Infantile Mortality per 1,000 Live Births	46
1945 District Infantile Mortality per 1,000 Legitimate Births	16
1945 District Infantile Mortality per 1,000 Illegitimate Births	214

The infant mortality (deaths of children under 1 year of age) was due to 4 deaths occurring soon after birth—the causes being prematurity (1), congenital defect, etc. (2), murder (1). There were no deaths in children under 2 years of age from enteritis, and no deaths from puerperal or infectious diseases with the exception of tuberculosis.

Of the total of 84 deaths, 35 were due to cardiovascular diseases and 20 to cancer—at least 4 persons were over 90 years of age, and 8 over 80 years.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS :

This year marked the termination of the World War and, as the menace to London decreased, there was a gradual return of the evacuees to that area, with the result that in May, Glanconway Hostel was closed and with this closure, ended an instance of what can happen in a rural area under regional control, and also what can be accomplished in the face of adverse conditions by hard work and humanitarianism as shown by the Matron and her Staff at the Hostel.

During August, the Italian prisoners of war at the Cerrig Hostel and billeted in the District were replaced by Germans and the unsatisfactory state of affairs mentioned in my last report, eradicated, though matters had previously improved as the result of tightening of disciplinary control following representations made.

The position in regard to venereal disease continues to remain satisfactory, but it will be noted that 18% of the

births registered were illegitimate—the continuance of a similar figure from year to year demands careful consideration by all who are interested in the future health (moral and physical) of the rural areas, as the unhappiness and mental misery caused by this “social cancer” leads to a great deal of sub-normal health, due to worry and anxiety. The old methods of tackling these problems are obsolete and the sooner this is realised the better, as social conditions and influences in the rural areas have undergone a radical change during the last decade, and particularly so during the latter War years. As a part of the methods to be adopted, I would advocate efforts be made to see that every part of the District takes full advantage of the provisions for the erecting of community centres and furtherance of adult education under the 1945 Education Act—in the County Colleges for the compulsory part time education of young people under 18 years, there will no doubt be an opportunity to enlighten the coming generation of young people about these matters and also to end the drift from the rural areas if the curriculum is given a rural bias.

As the details of the White Paper on the proposed National Health Services underwent important changes during the year and were not finally settled, consideration of its implications on this District was postponed, but I strongly advocate that careful scrutiny be made of any arrangements and regulations to make sure that the health interests of people resident in this rural area are adequately safeguarded.

The Council have agreed to the necessity for the provision of a building in the upper area to include a mortuary and garages and it is hoped to proceed with the work as soon as practicable.

The amenities of the District were improved by the action of the Council in connection with the travelling facilities in the District.

On the whole, the general state of the health of the District was satisfactory during the year as well as during the whole war period, and it can be thankfully recorded that only minor damage and some inconvenience were suffered from enemy action.

With the cessation of hostilities came the end of all forms of A.R.P. and Home Defence activities, and I should like to pay a final tribute and personal thanks to those members of the different Services who voluntarily gave up their leisure time to train themselves to a state of commendable efficiency,

and I think the thanks of the District is due to the Women's Voluntary Service whose help was much appreciated particularly so with evacuation work—the kindness shown to the evacuees and the care extended especially to the children often involving personal discomfort and sacrifice during the dark days of the war period by the majority of the inhabitants of the District will remain outstanding when many other matters connected with that period in our history will be forgotten.

HEALTH SERVICES :

In October, Dr. Travis resigned as M.O.H. for the lower part of the District after many years of service as whole time M.O.H. to the Combined Districts Health Authority. Whilst of late years not so physically active, his ability to adapt himself and his enthusiasm for modern advances in public health matters, backed by his wide experience were a valuable asset to the District, and he had taken an important and leading part in the development of the public health services from its initial stages.

When the question of a successor to Dr. Travis was considered, I strongly advised the Council to end the dual system of control for the future—as a temporary measure I was appointed to take over the whole District.

Mr. G. R. Hughes acts as Sanitary Inspector wholetime, also acting as Engineer and Surveyor—the number of men permanently employed by the Council will need to be increased.

The various clinics and laboratory services noted in previous reports continue to give valuable and appreciated assistance, and it is hoped that conditions will soon permit of the extension of these facilities—the full development of the E.M.S. Hospital at Wrexham into a clinical investigation and treatment centre is a great asset to the area.

It gives me pleasure to report that at last it has been possible for the Rural Divisions of the St. John's Brigade to procure temporary ambulances, with the result that there will be an ambulance service covering the whole District next year under the care of the Llanrwst, Llangerniew and Uwchaed Divisions. As these bodies are maintained on an entirely voluntary basis, I trust that every encouragement will be given to them in their effort to raise funds to procure more suitable vehicles, and that their voluntary services will not be imposed upon by expecting them to transport patients who are fit enough and able to travel without any physical harm by other means.

WATER SUPPLIES :

A detailed report of water supplies is required this year, and they can be divided into groups as follows :—

(1) Llanfihangel and Pentrellynymyer receive a piped supply from the Alwen Reservoir of the Birkenhead Authority—Yspytty has been provided by the Council with a piped supply from a 5,000 gallon reservoir—the water comes from springs and is untreated. This group can be considered as adequately supplied so far as the villages are concerned.

(2) Cerrig, Glasfryn and Cefnbrith have a piped supply from a 56,000 gallon reservoir which is fed by springs. Bacteriological examination shows that the source of supply is satisfactory, and there has been no need to use the chlorination plant provided. The supply is deficient in quantity and the relaying of supply pipes to Cefnbrith in an attempt to help the worse spot has had to be postponed owing to inability to procure the pipes. Further development of this source is not possible, and it will not be possible to supply the farms in the area owing to the shortage of water supplies.

(3) Tynant, Llangwm, Dinmael and Pentrevoelas have a piped supply from sources under private or Council's ownership, whilst Maerdy and Rhydlydan are dependent upon covered roadside wells fitted with pumps and under supervision of the Council. The pipes at Tynant and Llangwm have been renewed during the year.

All these supplies are unsatisfactory in quality and/or quantity and out of reach of most of the farms in the areas.

The Council propose to remedy the position in regard to Groups 2 and 3 by the provision of a piped supply from a reservoir to which water will be pumped from the Alwen Reservoir and supplied by gravitation to the whole area. This scheme was under consideration before the war and at present, plans and negotiations have reached an advanced stage—it is to be hoped that nothing will be allowed to prevent the completion of this urgently required scheme as soon as practicable as, in addition to giving an adequate supply to the villages named, the supply will be within reach of most of the farms in the area.

(4) Gwytherin and Llangerniew have a piped supply from a reservoir of 26,000 and 30,000 gallons respectively—the former was constructed by the Council within

recent years. The water comes from springs and is not treated. Quantity and quality are satisfactory.

(5) Melincoed, Capel Garmon and Llanddoget depend on springs, which are covered and protected—these villages and the farms in the surrounding area require an efficient supply as the present ones are unsatisfactory.

(6) Pandy Tudur is dependent on springs, and Eglwysbach was provided with a temporary piped supply to supplement that provided by the village pump and other unsatisfactory sources. Plans have been submitted to central authorities of schemes to provide an adequate supply capable of further development for both these areas as the present supplies are unsatisfactory in quality and quantity.

Three of the public supplies are plumbo-solvent. The Council have adopted bye-laws regulating the material to be used in Service Pipes. Any contamination shown as the result of bacteriological examination or otherwise suspected is investigated and the source of the defect remedied when and how possible.

Water Supplies to 8 houses in the hamlet of Tan Lan were found to be contaminated by Sewage. Action resulted in an entirely new source being used and proper storage and new pipes provided. The new source was bacterially examined before using for this purpose.

Samples of water examined for private supplies were found to be plumbo-solvent and the owner directed how to meet the defect. Numerous isolated houses in the area and also farms have their own supplies which vary in quality and quantity.

These numerous small sources of public water supplies scattered throughout the District are troublesome to maintain and the work of keeping them as free as possible from contamination, preserving the supplies and supplementing supplies by carrying water from other sources absorbs much time and in the end give unsatisfactory results for the expense entailed.

The new comprehensive schemes proposed will bring to a large part of the District a plentiful supply of pure water and not only benefit the villages but also bring water supplies within the reach of many farms which are now unable to obtain a supply from a public source—the following tables prepared primarily in response to the request of the Ministry will also show the benefits to be derived from the schemes so far proposed.

HIRAETHOG RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES

Estimated number of inhabited houses in the district ...	1737
1. Number of houses now supplied from public Mains	187
2. Number of houses now supplied from Stand pipes...	136
3. Number of houses now supplied from other sources piped	62
4. Number of houses now supplied from other sources Stand pipe	7
Total	392

5. Estimated number of houses within reach of Councils Proposed schemes.

SCHEME "A" UWCHALED WATER SCHEME.

Covering Area	No. of Houses in area	No. of Houses that can be supplied	No. of Houses that cannot be supplied
Cerrig-y-Druidion Pentrevoelas Rhydlydan Maerdy Llangwm	517	466	51

SCHEME "B" ALWEN SUPPLY

Area	No. of Houses already supplied by Alwen Mains	No. of Houses above area of Supply	No. of Houses that cannot be supplied
Part Parish of Cerrig-y- Druidion and Llanfihangel G.M.	20	25	28

SCHEME "C" LLYN CONWY SCHEME.

Parish	No. of Houses in Parish	No. of Houses that can be supplied	No. of houses that cannot be Supplied
Llanrwst Rural and part of Pentrevoelas	470	408	62
Llanddoget	55	55	Nil.
Eglwysbach	264	246	18
Llangerniew	222	195	27
Gwytherin	78	55	23
Tir Ifan (if Necessary)	68	60	8
Totals	1157	1019	138

Total number of Houses in District that can be supplied 1533, or 88%.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE :

Cerrig village is well sewered, and the sewage is treated on efficient lines—new sludge beds were constructed during the year.

Glasfryn, Cefnbrith, Llanfihangel, Dimael and Capel Garmon are sewered and the sewage treated by tank and filter.

Pentrevoelas, Llangerniew and Ysppyty are partly sewered—the two former villages are drained by a private sewer, and the last named has no outfall works.

The remainder of the villages have no sewerage installations, and future provision of this is dependent on water supplies. Many of the isolated houses and farms outside the ambit of the villages have drainage systems discharging into cesspools or septic tanks, but a good number have no drainage arrangement, and these are dealt with when met.

Three new drainage systems were put in during the year as a consequence of informal action with the respective owners.

HOUSING :

No temporary or Swedish houses were applied for by the Council as they were considered unsuitable for the area.

During the year, much needed repairs were carried out on the Council houses at Cerrig, Llangwm, Glasfryn and Cefnbrith.—

The Council decided in September, that owing to the high altitude of the District, it was advisable to delay building operations until the beginning of next Spring. On being notified that the provisions of the Housing Rural Workers Acts would cease on September 30th, the Council appealed for the extension of the Act as the most efficient means of dealing with individual houses and small tenements—two claims under the Act were paid during the year and numerous alterations and additions to existing houses sanctioned.

The great amount of preparatory work needed in connection with the proposed housing schemes occupied much of the Council's staff and taxed their patience—eventually by the end of the year, the Council had acquired five sites out of the thirteen needed and was in a position to advertise for tenders for the erection of four houses each at Cerrig, Pentrevoelas and Llangerniew. Also negotiations were in the final stages in connection with plans and sites for houses at Melincoed.

Llanddoget, Pandy Tudur, Gwytherin and Eglwysbach and consideration was well advanced in regard to the houses for Llangwm, Dinmael, Glasfryn, Cefnbrith, Nebo and Capel Garmon. Type B. was adopted as being most suitable for the District.

Considering the number of scattered sites to be acquired with the varying complicated negotiations necessary in each case and the multiplicity of the Ministries, Authorities, Officials, Owners, etc., who have to be consulted before even tenders can be invited, it can be recorded that satisfactory progress has been made during the year .

REFUSE COLLECTION :

The acquisition of a lorry by the Council has materially improved conditions, and now collection of house refuse and night soil where necessary is carried out in all parts of the District regularly once a fortnight—it has been found possible to reduce the number of refuse tips. In spite of shortage of supplies 40 new ashbins have been provided by owners of property previously without bins or ashpits.

DISINFECTION, ETC.

Four houses were disinfected during the year after cases of infectious diseases and one person compensated for damage due to dirty habits of an evacuee.

There are no swimming pools or permanent camping sites in the District, and no disinfection was required.

A complaint regarding pollution of Garrog and Hiraethog rivers was investigated and the nuisance rectified—also the same action was taken in consequence of a complaint from the Inspector of Factories in regard to a sanitary convenience.

SCHOOLS :

There are 16 schools in the District—9 have a piped water supply and 7 have a water carriage system of drainage—the remainder rely on conservancy systems.

Apart from four schools of fairly recent construction, the remainder are structurally deficient according to modern standards and require replacement.

It is anticipated that new primary and secondary schools will be erected in the District under the Education Act, 1945, and it is hoped that the Council will play a leading part in assuring that modern adequately staffed schools are provided so that the children of the District will be in a position to benefit under the Act without having to undertake long daily bus journeys.

FOOD :

Milk : Cowsheds and Dairies were periodically visited and two samples of milk taken were found satisfactory—21 premises were inspected, necessary repairs and alterations suggested before registration under Milk and Dairies Order.

Most of the milk produced is disposed of to the Milk Marketing Board, and the advent of the lorries has led to improvement of many of the bye-roads, and it is to be hoped, the quality of the milk. Much improvement can still be made in the matter of the production of clean milk and this is dependent to some extent on the provision of adequate water supply, but to a greater degree on the recognition of the utmost cleanliness and attention to personal hygiene.

Meat : Supplies are still obtained from central abattoirs and, in my opinion, a return to the prewar practice would increase the material and hygienic quality of the meat supplied to the District.

Bread : Bakehouses were periodically visited and found satisfactory.

INSPECTIONS (Sanitary Inspector) :

Total number of visits	670
Number of informal notices	43
Number of statutory notices	Nil
Informal notices compiled with	43
No prosecutions necessary.	

INFECTIOUS DISEASES :

In the upper area, there was an epidemic of Measles localised to two school areas at the beginning of the year—apart from individual cases of infectious diseases mentioned in the table shown below, the area has been free from any other epidemic.

In the lower area, so far as can be ascertained, there was one case of Scarletina.

For the whole District, owing to the intelligent appreciation of the parents of the value of the treatment and the co-operation of the School Staffs and Dr. McKendrick, it has been possible to maintain the satisfactory standards in regard to Diphtheria Prophylaxis. 98.5% of the children 5—15 years of age resident in the District had been treated at June 30th.

and 98.4% at December 31st—over 200 had received reinforcing injections prior to December 31st, 1945. The corresponding figures for the age group 1—15 years were 86% and 93.5% and due credit for this satisfactory state should be given to the two County Health Visitors. I still strongly advocate the incorporation of the Shick Test as a part of the school medical services.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES :

The table includes statistics from lower area so far as obtainable.

	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Sonne Dysentery	Puerperal Pyrexia	Measles
TOTAL	2	1	1	1	38
Admitted to					
Hospital	1	1	0	0	0
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0

Age Groups	M F	M F	M F	F	M F
0—					
1—					2
3—	1				3 2
5—	1				14 9
10—					4 3
15—					1
25 and over ...		1*	1	1	

* Also notified later as a "carrier."

TUBERCULOSIS :

In the upper area, two cases of pulmonary tuberculosis in females aged 31 and 42 years were notified—the latter patient died and her husband aged 37 years developed fatal tuberculous meningitis. All these patients lived in Council houses and were removed to hospital.

In the lower area the only record available is of one case of non-pulmonary tuberculosis in a female, aged 18 years.

The returns received from the Registrar General show that there were 4 deaths from tuberculosis—2 male and 1

female pulmonary, and 1 male non-pulmonary, but owing to absence of necessary details, I am unable to comment further.

In conclusion I have to thank the Clerk and his Staff for their assistance, and also acknowledge the efficiency and industry of the Sanitary Inspector who has had to cope with a great amount of work with a depleted staff at certain periods.

I beg to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

September, 1946.

IFOR H. DAVIES, M.B.Ch.B.